

March 13, 2013

Heart Disease and Stroke Advocates Support the Governor's Effort to Insure More Arizonans

Statement from Phil Pomeroy, Greater Phoenix Division Board Chairman, and Jeff Anderson, Advocacy Chair, for the American Heart Association/American Stroke Association (AHA/ASA) in Arizona.

Governor Brewer's plan to allow Medicaid coverage to more Arizonans demonstrates true leadership in the fight against heart disease and stroke, which kills more than 11,700 people in Arizona each year. The Governor's proposal demonstrates great responsibility and, if enacted, has the potential to eliminate barriers for the proper diagnosis, treatment and prevention of heart disease and stroke in Arizona patients. We encourage members of the Legislature to join with Governor Brewer in using the state's highly performing Medicaid program to provide health insurance to our most vulnerable populations and mend our public health safety net.

The American Heart Association/American Stroke Association stands ready to participate in the implementation of the plan that will extend lifesaving health insurance coverage to more than 57,000 low-income Arizonans and restore the population already approved by Arizona's voters. It is simply the right thing to do as a public health policy, as well as sound fiscal policy.

Between 1999 and 2009, the rate of deaths from cardiovascular disease (CVD) fell 32.7 percent, but still accounted for nearly one in three deaths in the nation. That's 2,150 people dying from CVD each day — about one death every 40 seconds. According to projections in the 2013 report, heart health may only improve by six percent if current trends continue. The biggest barriers to success are projected increases in obesity and diabetes, and only modest improvements in diet and physical activity. On a positive note, smoking, high cholesterol and high blood pressure rates are projected to decline.

About the American Heart Association/American Stroke Association, Arizona

The American Heart Association is devoted to saving people from heart disease and stroke — America's No. 1 and No. 4 killers. We team with millions of volunteers to fund innovative research, fight for stronger public health policies, and provide lifesaving tools and information to prevent and treat these diseases. The Dallas-based association is the nation's oldest and largest voluntary organization dedicated to fighting heart disease and stroke. To learn more or to get involved, call 1-800-AHA-USA1, visit heart.org or call any of our offices around the country.

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